

Doha Development Agenda negotiations must be revived – Failure is not an option

The American Chamber of Commerce in Germany (AmCham Germany) is deeply concerned that WTO members might allow the Doha Development Agenda negotiations to fail because of disputes over agricultural policy – even though the vast majority of world trade and investment is in manufactured goods and services, not in agriculture.

We understand that there may be one last chance to get back to the negotiating table in November with a view to completing the round in 2007. We strongly encourage every effort to cooperate between now and then to achieve the goals of the Doha Development agenda.

We call on EU and US negotiators to work together to achieve results in opening markets and improving the regulatory environment for manufactured goods and services. This requires creativity and flexibility on agricultural policy change. Maintaining market distorting agricultural policy does not secure our future nor does it help to achieve global development goals.

Solid Results will deliver economic growth

- Securing significant reductions in tariffs and non-tariff barriers for manufactured goods and services will provide a much-needed boost to business development and increase consumer choice around the globe.
- Providing ‘tariff free, quota free’ access for 100% of Least Developed Country (LDC) products, will assist the poorest countries. It is essential that their most competitive products in the agricultural and textile sectors are covered by this policy.
- Finalising the trade facilitation agreement will bring major time and cost savings by cutting back unnecessary administrative complexities – a win-win for all concerned.
- Agreeing to reform of agricultural policies, in order to phase out trade and market distorting mechanisms and subsidies, will give developing, and particularly least developed countries, a fair chance in agriculture, which is often what the majority of their populations’ livelihood depends upon.

Negotiators must get back to the table

However difficult it may be, the WTO and the multilateral trading system generally, must not be allowed to fail. A system of bi- and plurilateral agreements is no substitute for a sound, coherent international framework. A failed Round will deny citizens an economic boost and more jobs and will seriously damage the development prospects of countries that need these benefits the most. Negotiators had made progress. This should not be lost.

AmCham Germany calls upon government leaders to reinvigorate their negotiating team’s will to reach an agreement, solve the deadlock in the key area of agriculture, and to refocus on what really counts: promoting global economic growth. It is critically important that market liberalization moves ahead and that commonly agreed rules – the simpler the better – governing global trade and investment prevail. It’s not too late to lead the Doha round to success. It only takes a redoubling of efforts and political will.

American Chamber of Commerce in Germany e.V.

The American Chamber of Commerce in Germany (AmCham Germany) is a private, non-profit organization. With over 3,000 members, it is the largest bilateral economic organization in Europe and represents the largest group of foreign investors in Germany. AmCham Germany’s goals include strengthening German-American economic relations and promoting Germany as an investment location. The chamber also serves as a link to investors in the United States.